



# NSW GOVERNMENT FOOD SAFETY STRATEGY 2015 – 2021

SAFE FOOD FROM Paddock TO PLATE



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The new  
state of  
business

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## SAFER FOOD, CLEARER CHOICES



# MINISTER'S FOREWORD



## NSW IS AN INTERNATIONAL SUPPLIER OF SAFE, HIGH-QUALITY FOOD.

As Australia's first and only wholly integrated (through-chain) food regulatory agency, the NSW Food Authority is responsible for regulating and monitoring food safety across the entire food industry supply chain. This state enjoys a strong track record of food safety and a reputation of excellence because the vast majority of businesses do the right thing. The food industry's commitment is reflected in the food safety compliance rate in NSW remaining steady at 94 per cent in recent years.

Food is big business in NSW, contributing \$113 billion to the gross state product (GSP) in 2011-12. The NSW Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021 highlights the commitment, support and resources the Government will provide and a clear vision to

drive and further enhance this state's reputation as a supplier of premium, safe, quality food both domestically and internationally.

Our goal is to make sure that food businesses contribute to NSW's economic growth and prosperity by reducing foodborne illnesses and delivering safe superior-quality food to local and international consumers.

Demand for our products here and overseas is growing as consumers' diets evolve and their expectations shift. Government and industry will work together to meet these changing consumer demands, while ensuring confidence in the safety and integrity of the food supply chain.

**The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson MP  
Minister for Primary Industries**

## THE NSW GOVERNMENT

- Supports international trade and investment, which has created 14,000 jobs and generated \$4.4 billion in investment
- Invests \$100 million each year in research and development (R&D) to support agriculture, fisheries and biosecurity
- Works with the state's universities, research development corporations and cooperative centres to promote R&D for safer food.

Mitigating the risk of foodborne illnesses caused by food supply processes and food quality is central to ensuring food safety. The NSW Food Authority trains food retailers in safe food handling to minimise outbreaks of salmonellosis, and we work with a number of sectors to ensure safe on-farm production processes.

The NSW Government through key agencies including the NSW Food Authority, Local Government, Primary Industries and NSW Health make an important contribution to ensuring food safety in NSW.

The NSW Food Authority also wants to ensure consumers are provided with the information and tools they need to be better informed about their daily food choices. The NSW Food Authority works with local government to support compliance in the retail food sector through the Scores on Doors hygiene and food safety rating program. Scores on Doors provides consistency for food businesses across NSW through the use of a standard assessment checklist, and allows consumers to see the hygiene result of a store's last inspection.

In the last financial year, less than 2 per cent of businesses did not meet food safety standards. The Name and Shame register lists these breaches to enable consumers to make informed choices about where to eat.

We recognise the challenges of rising obesity rates in our state. We focus on delivering simple menu and nutritional information through initiatives such as the Health Star Rating system on packaged foods and the kilojoule labelling campaign in fast food outlets. In addition, the NSW Food Authority provides food safety information in nine key languages: Arabic, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Greek, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese and English to ensure consumers are provided with the information and tools they need to be better informed about their daily food choices.

Effective food safety and food quality management underpins confidence in Australia's food industry. Multiple studies have found that consumers are willing to pay premiums for products that have traceable origins and additional food safety assurances. Businesses incur relatively small costs as a result of food regulation imposed by the NSW Food Authority

and consumers in NSW pay very low proportions of the cost of final goods as a result of regulatory costs on business.

The NSW Food Authority holds a significant level of responsibility in providing ongoing assurance to industry and the broader community, domestically and internationally, around the safety and quality of food produced and sold in NSW.

This Food Safety Strategy builds on the last decade of the NSW Food Authority's achievements. It capitalises on our food safety track record to strengthen market access; generate premiums for our safe, quality food; and deliver food safely in our state.

Over the next six years, the NSW Government will work with industry across the supply chain to grow markets domestically and to foster the export of safe, reliable, high-quality food products while maintaining low compliance costs.

### This commitment will be delivered by:

- Reducing food poisoning incidents in NSW by 30 per cent
- Cutting red tape by \$4.5 million, with \$6 million already achieved in streamlined regulatory processing
- Improving service delivery to businesses by introducing 24/7 online licence

- applications to 15,000 licensees with the NSW Food Authority during 2015
- Rapidly responding in the event of a food safety incident
- Removing unnecessary duplication for 40,000 food service businesses across the state
- Training food retailers in safe food handling to minimise outbreaks of salmonellosis,

- and working with a number of sectors to ensure safe on-farm production processes
- Providing educational information and state-wide technical training for meat and poultry abattoirs to support compliance with animal welfare requirements.

1 Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australian food statistics 2011-12, Table 4.1: Retail food turnover, by state and category. 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Industry, 2012-13, Table 2: Manufacturing industry by state by ANZSIC subdivision, Cat No. 8155.0.3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Research and Experimental Development, Businesses, Australia, 2011-12, Table 1.7: Business expenditure on R&D by industry, Cat No. 8104.0.

# SAFE FOOD

IS

# BIG BUSINESS

# IN NSW

The NSW Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021 is a comprehensive strategy outlining the NSW government's commitment to food safety and quality management that underpins confidence in this state's valuable food industry.

**\$113B**  
PA



FOOD INDUSTRY IN NSW,  
ACCOUNTING FOR  
**24% OF THE GSP<sup>^</sup>**

**\$5B**  
PA



STORAGE AND  
DISTRIBUTION OF  
FOOD PRODUCTS<sup>7</sup>

**2,000**



**FOOD-PROCESSING  
COMPANIES**

**42,000**



**FARM-BASED  
BUSINESSES**



**150,000  
PEOPLE**

ARE DIRECTLY EMPLOYED  
IN THE AGRICULTURE AND  
FOOD SECTORS

**\$45B**  
PA



FOOD RETAIL<sup>\*8</sup>

**\$12B**  
PA



PRIMARY PRODUCTION<sup>5</sup>

**1,400**



**FISHING  
BUSINESSES**

**55,000**



**FOOD  
BUSINESSES**



**69,000  
PEOPLE**

PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN  
SUPERMARKETS AND  
GROCERY STORES

**\$25B**  
PA



FOOD MANUFACTURING<sup>6</sup>

**\$5.1B**  
PA



FOOD EXPORTS FROM NSW  
ACCOUNTING FOR

**8%** OF THE STATE'S  
TOTAL EXPORTS<sup>9</sup>

**\$2.9B**

OF FOOD EXPORTS  
WERE PROCESSED FOOD

..... WHEAT .....

**\$1.2B**

..... AND BEEF .....

**\$832M**

WERE THE TWO LARGEST  
FOOD EXPORTS<sup>10</sup>

**40,000**



**RETAIL FOOD  
SERVICE BUSINESSES**



**128,000  
PEOPLE**

EMPLOYED IN CAFES,  
RESTAURANTS AND  
TAKEAWAY FOOD SERVICES

<sup>^</sup> The Gross State Product is the measurement of the economic output of a state and summarises the value added by industries within the state.

<sup>\*</sup> (including supermarkets, grocery stores, liquor stores, cafés, restaurants and takeaway food services)

<sup>4</sup> NSW Food Authority, 2014. <sup>5</sup> Primed for Growth, Agriculture Industry Action Plan, Department of Primary Industries, 2014. <sup>6</sup> Manufacturing Industry Action Plan, 2012. <sup>7</sup> Australia's Trade by State and Territory, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2012. <sup>8</sup> NSW Trade & Investment, 2009-10. <sup>9</sup> ABS 2011, Cat No. 2702.0, Census of population and housing: TableBuilder Basic, Third release. <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/census?opendocument&navpos=10> <sup>10</sup> Ibid





# 1

OVERVIEW



## The NSW food industry contributes \$113 billion (24 per cent) to the GSP per annum and comprises 55,000 food businesses.

### Our state's versatile agriculture and food sectors include:

- livestock industries such as cattle, poultry, pigs and sheep
- the production of cereal and legume crops such as wheat, barley, canola, rice and chickpeas
- meat, dairy, aquaculture and seafood industries
- wine, grape and juice industries
- fruit and vegetable production
- the manufacturing and processing of both perishable and non-perishable goods
- retail food services.

Food retailing is the biggest driver of growth in NSW's retail industry.

In 2013–14, food retail turnover in supermarkets, grocery stores, liquor stores, cafés, restaurants and takeaway food services was valued at more than \$45 billion.<sup>4</sup>

Food safety is a key contributor to economic growth and is maintained through a top to bottom commitment to putting food safety first by preventing, managing and mitigating risks to ensure food is safe and correctly labelled.

Reducing the risk of foodborne illnesses caused by *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Listeria* bacteria, as well as cases of fatal anaphylaxis caused by allergen contamination, is our key risk mitigation strategy, as it is fundamental to ensuring healthy communities and a competitive economy. In NSW, foodborne illnesses account for \$375 million

in medical expenses and lost productivity annually. However, the majority of incidences are preventable. We will continue to work with medium to high-risk industries to maintain safe food-handling processes in retail businesses and ensure ongoing confidence in food safety.

Ensuring food safety means administering and enforcing food regulations, but we also need to achieve a balance between maximising food safety outcomes for consumers and minimising food businesses' costs of complying with regulation.

Food regulation in NSW plays an integral role in ensuring that food is safe for consumption and that consumers are adequately informed prior to purchasing. A well-designed and effectively

implemented regulatory framework delivers long-term benefits for industry, consumers and the broader economy.

Industry benefits from food regulation by avoiding the costs of food safety incidents, such as product recalls. Industry also enjoys reductions in insurance costs over the long term and increased demand for products. Producers avoid losing productivity from having to deal with food safety issues. There are also reputational benefits and resulting price premiums, with Australian food products generally achieving a price premium in international and domestic markets, partly due to Australia's international reputation for food safety.

The NSW Food Authority is Australia's first and only wholly integrated (through-chain) food regulatory agency, and is responsible for regulating and monitoring food safety across the food industry supply chain, from paddock to plate.

<sup>4</sup> NSW Trade & Investment 2014

## A STRONG TRACK RECORD

Each year the NSW Food Authority:

**LICENSES** 14,500 food businesses

**RESPONDS** to 36,000 helpline calls and complaints from industry and consumers

**CONDUCTS** 16,000 audits and inspections (including export audits)

**MANAGES** 1,000 investigations for breaches and prosecutions

**REPORTS** on more than 500 investigations of foodborne illness

**AUDITS** 1,000 facilities through 54 third-party auditors.

The NSW Food Authority issued over 66,000 Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) certificates in the past five years. In 2013-14, 1,587 penalty notices were issued to 1,000 food businesses, which equates to less than 2 per cent of NSW's food businesses.

The NSW Food Authority plays a central role in mitigating food safety risks across the supply chain by dealing directly with relevant businesses and stakeholders, and providing industry with high-level, science-based information on food safety and nutrition, as well as information about policies and access to leading experts in the field.

However, the NSW Food Authority cannot do this alone. Effective food safety management relies on stakeholders across the supply chain clearly understanding their roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and interdependencies.

This ensures:

- readiness for a food safety incident response
- emerging threats, both domestically and globally are monitored
- minimum food safety standards to drive economic growth

- market dynamics with quality control and supply to reinforce confidence in the safety of Australian food
- brand awareness and value, generating premiums from consumers who value safe, high-quality food
- consumer expectations and changing perceptions about food safety and quality are managed
- understanding of changing consumer demographics
- effective policy that promotes the activities of the food industry supply chain, and improves public and industry understanding and confidence in the value of the regulatory system
- coordination and collaboration across government agencies and jurisdictions
- advances in science and technology through partnerships with universities, CSIRO and R&D institutes

- innovative technologies are commercialised through partnerships with industry
- education and training that encourages businesses and employees to put food safety first to maintain a high standard of food production and safe food-handling processes
- timely and relevant information that enables consumers to make informed, healthier food choices

By increasing consumer confidence in food safety, maintaining the integrity of the regulatory framework and providing accessible and accurate information regarding the ingredients and origins of produce, regulators enable domestic and international consumers to make informed purchasing choices and help boost overall demand.

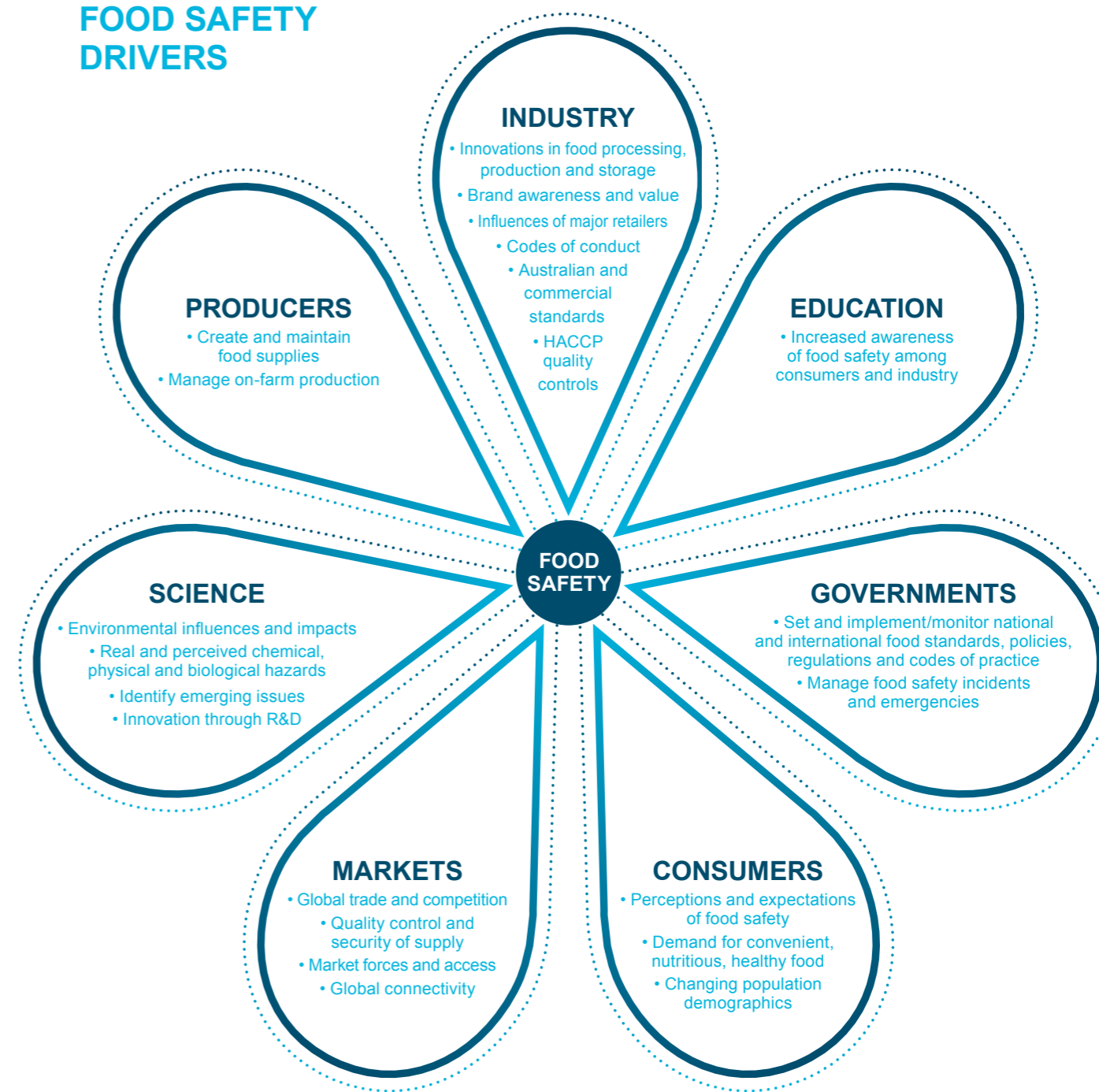
Safe food directly contributes to the health of our population. The Food Authority aims to support a healthy population and reduce the incidence of foodborne illnesses. However, foodborne illnesses remain a significant health issue in Australia, mainly due to *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Listeria* bacteria, and severe anaphylaxis cases caused by allergen contamination.

## FOODBORNE ILLNESSES ARE A SIGNIFICANT HEALTH ISSUE

Around 4.1 million cases of foodborne illness are reported nationally each year, with an annual cost of \$1.25 billion to our health system.\* The NSW Food Authority food safety programs led to a 13 per cent reduction in the state's incidences of foodborne gastroenteritis between 2000 and 2010, from 1.5 million to 1.3 million cases.\*\*

\*Department of Health, Annual Report 2013-14 \*\*Australian National University, Estimating the burden of foodborne illness in Australia circa 2010.

## FOOD SAFETY DRIVERS



The NSW Food Authority works with industry to get food to market quickly and safely – a responsibility shared by all food industry participants. Consumers want quality food that is safe, and labelling that helps them make informed, healthier choices. Businesses want to expand their domestic and export markets by delivering premium-quality, safe food products.

By ensuring safety along the supply chain, we generate consumer and market confidence. This underpins the state's economic development through domestic and export markets, and contributes to healthy and productive communities.





# 2

TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



## TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES

Australia is increasingly connected with the rest of the world through trade and the movement of people. The world's population is expected to grow from 7.2 billion today to 9.6 billion by 2050. Global food production will need to double to meet that demand. Of those expected 9.6 billion people, 15 per cent (1.5 billion) will be over the age of 65. This population group is particularly vulnerable to foodborne illnesses. The increase in the number of over-65s raises the importance of safe food and safe food practices.

By 2030, the number of Asian consumers capable of discretionary spending is forecast to increase sixfold to about 3.5 billion. By 2050, average incomes in Asia could match those in the US and Europe. China and India may overtake the US as the world's biggest economies, and Asia is likely to be the world's largest consumer of goods and services. These changes are taking place on Australia's doorstep, and they will generate new opportunities for the NSW food and agriculture sector.

In the context of the rising global middle class, NSW's and Australia's capacity to capitalise on a strong reputation for food safety and quality will be a significant advantage, offering an opportunity to ensure long-term returns. Australia is fortunate to have one of the world's safest food chains, ranking eighth out of 109 countries in the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2014 Global Food Security Index for food quality and safety.

In transitional economies such as China and India, consumers' focus is shifting from food security to food safety and quality. This is a significant driver of growth of NSW's food export markets, which are now outperforming competitors such as the US and Canada in terms of products being good value, safe and disease-free.

## AUSTRALIA LEADS ON SAFE, SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY FOOD

Attribute	Australia	Malaysia	US	China	France	Brazil	Canada
Good value	32%	21%	30%	31%	20%	24%	24%
High quality	37%	14%	41%	12%	42%	18%	34%
Expensive	21%	10%	39%	8%	41%	18%	24%
Safe	39%	17%	34%	13%	31%	19%	36%
Sustainable	31%	15%	19%	13%	20%	21%	25%
Good taste	27%	18%	28%	20%	30%	27%	24%
Healthy	30%	13%	21%	12%	22%	18%	26%
None of those	2%	15%	4%	25%	3%	9%	4%
Don't know	13%	25%	8%	12%	12%	18%	15%

Source: Brand Australia Global Food Strategy Research, Dec 2013.

## OPPORTUNITIES



According to research from professional services firm Deloitte, the 'Fantastic Five' industries expected to underpin Australia's next growth wave are gas, agribusiness, tourism, international education and wealth management. These could be worth an extra \$250 billion to the Australian economy over the next 20 years. In particular, agribusiness is set to drive the economy in terms of the production, processing, and distribution of food and fibre products and by-products.

### Agribusiness is fuelling economic growth

NSW agricultural producers have strong domestic markets as well as being big exporters of high-quality, safe food products. NSW agricultural producers' gross value of production (GVP) was \$10.8 billion in 2011-12, accounting for 23 per cent of Australia's agricultural GVP. NSW crops accounted for \$6.1 billion of agricultural production, while livestock slaughtered and other disposals accounted for \$3.1 billion, and livestock products accounted for \$1.6 billion. Cereals for grain is the

largest single food commodity by gross value (at \$2.4 billion), followed by cattle and calves (\$1.6 billion), wheat for grain (\$1.6 billion), poultry livestock (\$655 million), sheep and lamb livestock (\$616 million) and canola (\$535 million).

### New markets

Global food demand is set to rise in line with increases in the world's population, which is expected to grow by 60 million people a year over the next 20 years. Much of this population growth will be in India and Africa.

As Asia gets richer and the world's population grows, demand for food, agricultural produce and higher-value food products are set to boom.

Australia's proximity to the Asian market and its reputation as a safe, clean, green producer of quality food gives local companies a big advantage. For example, China alone is expected to face a shortage of about 20 billion litres of milk by 2020. This is coupled with a long-term global demand for milk powder, infant formula and cheese.

Agribusiness has evolved from being a producer of non-perishable commodities to being a major supplier of assured, safe high-quality products for Asia's fast-expanding middle-class consumer markets.

14 Deloitte Access Economics, 'Positioning for Prosperity? Catching the Next Wave', March 2014.

15 ABS - note: agricultural production includes non food products.

16 'The impacts of food regulation in NSW', KPMG, December 2014.





“ There is a US\$3.7 billion opportunity in the Asia-Pacific for the Australian food industry to capitalise on its reputation for food safety and quality. ”

### Market access

In November 2014, Australia signed a landmark free-trade deal with China, which is already seeing investment in new farms and processing with premium local companies that have dependable growth.

In partnership with the Commonwealth Government, the NSW Food Authority hosted delegates from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) in October 2014. The visit was part of a review to verify Australian regulatory systems provide the same food safety outcomes as the US. Given that NSW accounts for approximately 40 per cent of Australia's food manufacturing and processing, the visit enabled the US to reduce inspection requirements for

Australian food on arrival in the US. Based on this success, the NSW Food Authority showcased our systems to delegations from China and the European Union (EU), which have resulted in reduced inspection requirements for imported Australian food.

### Premium products

Locally, more consumers will seek out high-quality, safe and reliable produce from trusted sources. They will consume more dairy and horticulture products, beef, grains and wine. There will be a greater demand for products such as convenience foods and drinks, fresh goods and foods with additional nutritional benefits.

Through our work with industry consultative committees,

the NSW Food Authority generates ideas to support safe food businesses, inform a more holistic approach to policy development and lead national policy initiatives that achieve industry growth.

For example, in conjunction with our shellfish industry committee, the NSW Food Authority has developed a Harvest and Hold policy for shellfish producers that will enable them to return to market earlier and minimise business losses after adverse environmental events. The NSW Food Authority closes shellfish harvest areas when environmental conditions make the shellfish potentially unsafe to eat. This happens between 300 and 400 times in various areas each year. Areas are re-opened when testing shows

that the shellfish are safe to eat. The closures are necessary to protect public safety, but they create a financial burden on industry through lost sales. To mitigate this impact, the Harvest and Hold policy enables operators to harvest product to have it available for market once test results come through which reduces business downtime due to adverse environmental events. This policy will come into effect in early 2015 and is expected to generate red tape savings in the order of \$3.3 million per year.

### Protein-rich foods

As incomes rise in Asia, so too will the average kilojoule intake per person. More protein will be consumed, which will power a dietary shift from grains and cereals towards meat,

dairy, fruit and vegetables. This will also mean a swing to more intensive land use.

Agribusiness is reported to have the greatest potential to contribute to Australia's prosperity, through the production of protein-rich foods, particularly aquaculture products such as fish. Sixteen per cent of animal protein consumed globally comes from fish. The health benefits of a protein-rich diet appeal to increasingly health-conscious consumers.<sup>19</sup>

### Global markets drive exports

NSW's well-deserved reputation for safe food helps it to maintain existing markets, attract higher premiums on products

and generate export growth. Transitional economies such as China and India are shifting their focus from food security to food safety and quality, reflecting their rising purchasing power and experiences with food safety incidents.

NSW farmers are primed to compete in new and expanding markets, particularly those producing grains, beef, sheep, cotton, wool, dairy, wine and oil seeds. Globally, Australia is the fourth largest exporter of dairy products and NSW supports nearly 2,000 dairy businesses. Asia's consumers want safe, quality food and the recent successful free-trade agreement negotiations by the Commonwealth provide NSW with the opportunity to grow trading partnerships in Asia.

<sup>19</sup> Deloitte Access Economics, Positioning for Prosperity? Catching the Next Wave, March 2014.



## Targeted R&D to reduce foodborne illnesses

Advances in scientific knowledge will improve policy, regulation and food handling processes. Consequently, the systematic and ongoing review of the science underpinning food safety is essential. The Food Authority allocates \$3 million of its annual budget to maintaining collaborative research, conducting food surveys, providing expert advice and carrying out risk assessments.

conventional production systems, from when they are one day old until the end of the laying cycle. This research will result in standard operating procedures for egg farmers, farm managers and food handlers for managing *Salmonella* on farms and throughout the food supply chain.

We continue to partner with NSW Health and Westmead Hospital on the use of a rapid, discriminatory *Salmonella* genotyping system. *Salmonella Typhimurium* is the most

and link outbreak sub-types to a particular food sample. Because the time intervals between each step are intrinsic to this surveillance system, excessively lengthy periods may impact outbreak detection, investigation quality and subsequent preventative measures. Our partnership with NSW Health and Westmead Hospital helps us to initiate risk mitigation strategies at an individual business level or across the sector to prevent future outbreaks.

## Fresh produce safety

We are working with the Fresh Produce Safety Centre at the University of Sydney and Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited to develop horticultural guidelines that will ensure the safety of fresh produce. This will also enable the NSW Food Authority to better identify on-farm issues, and help us to work with small businesses such as market gardens to improve the safety of production processes.

The NSW Food Authority will research the effectiveness of on-farm intervention strategies (including vaccinating birds, adding organic acids to feed, litter control and identifying bird stress) in minimising the *Salmonella* contamination.

## Salmonella strategy

In partnership with the Australian Egg Corporation Limited (AECL), under experimental conditions, the NSW Food Authority will research the effectiveness of on-farm intervention strategies (including vaccinating birds, adding organic acids to feed, litter control and identifying bird stress) in minimising the *Salmonella* contamination in and on eggs. An extension of this research is to study the level of *Salmonella* contamination in laying hens housed in both free-range and

commonly isolated *Salmonella* serotype in NSW, accounting for 53 per cent of all *Salmonella* notifications in 2013. In reviews of NSW disease outbreaks in 2013, 75 per cent of foodborne salmonellosis outbreaks were attributed to *Salmonella Typhimurium*. Given the prominent role *Salmonella* plays in foodborne gastroenteritis and the endemic nature of *Salmonella Typhimurium* in NSW, the NSW Food Authority requires a timely sub-typing technique that enables us to identify *Salmonella* clusters

## Minimising seafood poisoning outbreaks

Through a partnership with the University of Technology, Sydney, the NSW Food Authority is helping the commercial and recreational fishing industry to understand and manage the emerging risk of ciguatera poisoning from NSW-caught fish. In 2014, ciguatera illnesses were traced to fish caught in NSW waters on the Mid North Coast. Outbreaks in NSW have been compounded by the fact that there has been

an increasing incidence of ciguatera off Queensland's Gold Coast. Our project will establish a testing capability for ciguatera toxin in NSW. Together with a survey of ciguatera toxin levels in targeted seafood, this will enable the NSW Food Authority to provide appropriate food safety advice and respond more effectively to this emerging public health threat.

## Microbiological monitoring to manage quality

We continue to enhance our evidence base through microbiological monitoring to gather data on food commodities and business types to ensure safety and quality of products.

*Campylobacter* is the leading cause of gastroenteritis and foodborne illness in Australia. The prevalence of *Campylobacter* on poultry is well known. Due to the limited data available in Australia of *Campylobacter* in non-poultry food along with the high rate of campylobacteriosis, a survey will commence in 2015 to gather information on the prevalence and level of *Campylobacter* in non-poultry foods sold in NSW and inform the NSW Food Authority's future risk assessment work and to support our goal of a 30 per cent reduction in foodborne illness caused by *Campylobacter*.

A recent report on the Plant Products Scheme which examined the retail display

of cut melons, noted that the growth of pathogenic microorganisms was possible on cut melons due to a mixed approach to refrigerated storage, however very few outbreaks had been reported. Refrigerated storage of cut melons remains a point of deliberation for industry and Environmental Health Officers inspecting supermarkets and greengrocers. The NSW Food Authority survey on the microbiological quality of cut melons will add to local knowledge of the prevalence of pathogens on this product and current in-store handling practices to better guide decisions by industry on the safe storage and handling of cut melons. The survey will be conducted with the assistance of local councils.

The NSW Food Authority allocates \$3 million of its annual budget to maintaining collaborative research, conducting food surveys, providing expert advice and carrying out risk assessments.







“  
 The NSW Food Authority has saved \$6 million by reducing red tape, and is streamlining regulatory processes to save a further \$4.5 million over the next six years.  
 ”

**Red-tape reduction through streamlined regulation**

By introducing a new audit system for shellfish producers, which involves estuary based verification rather than audits by individual producer, and continual monitoring at no additional cost, we have halved the audit time to 30 minutes thereby reduced audit frequency and cost to the shellfish producers.

The NSW Food Authority approves 10–15 commercial auditors per year to audit licensed food

premises. Mandatory third-party auditor training sessions have been cut from two days to one, saving on travel, accommodation and work downtime costs.

Microbiological verification of poultry processors has reduced the need for annual on farm audits. Microbiological data from poultry processors is shared with the NSW Food Authority so we can monitor the progress made in reducing the incidence of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* pathogens.

**CHALLENGES**



Current challenges include competing consumer demands; finding ways to grow export markets in China, India and the EU; and keeping abreast of demographics driving wide-ranging dietary changes.

NSW has maintained a strong track record in delivering safe, quality food products to meet changing demands.

The NSW Food Authority achieves this through our continual focus on increasing the effectiveness of food standards and regulations to ensure market confidence in the safety of Australian food.

Food regulation provides clear boundaries and certainty about food product safety, as well as assurances for consumers and businesses that the latest science is being applied to food safety processes and that potential adverse food incidents are being managed.

By working with industry consultative committees, we continue to bring new ideas and innovations to the supply chain to provide solutions for these challenges.

**Demographic changes**

Consumer profiles are changing. The general immunity level of Australians is decreasing with our ageing population, and

advances in medical science are prolonging the lives of people with once-terminal illnesses. It is estimated that around 20 per cent of the population is comprised of those who are pregnant or immuno-compromised, who are more susceptible than others to infection, including those caused by foodborne illnesses.

However, the degree of susceptibility is wide-ranging – and for this reason, the NSW Food Authority adopts risk management strategies that strike a balance between implementing food safety control measures and managing nutritional intake. This is especially critical for older people in long-term care, where the focus is on providing safe ways to provide a nutritious and varied diet that contributes to overall wellbeing.

**Increased consumption of takeaway food**

Consumers are eating out more, and they expect to buy food that is safe and of high quality. The NSW Food Authority runs targeted training programs to increase food-handling skills in restaurants, cafes, takeaways, catering businesses and bakeries as each business is required to have a Food Safety Supervisor on staff to ensure consistent safe food-handling.



## New food types and preparation methods

Due to longer working hours, family dietary needs and health-consciousness, we are seeing a shift in what's stocked on supermarket shelves. For instance, there is more demand for convenient, ready-to-eat meals. However, many popular new food types, such as ready to eat salads, are minimally processed and do not involve cooking to destroy microorganisms. Further, food supply is becoming increasingly global, and the volume of international food trade is growing, which means it is increasingly difficult to control and track all elements of the food chain.

The days of the weekly trip to the supermarket are gradually being replaced by e-commerce as more people turn their back on shopping in stores and opt instead for online grocery shopping. Such changes challenge food safety compliance, particularly in ensuring food temperatures are managed during storage and transport, and avoiding the contamination of raw products and cross-contamination of foods.

## Traceability and product recalls

The NSW Food Authority ensures a reliable process in terms of product traceability and product recalls. In an effort to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses associated with eggs, those sold in NSW are required to be stamped for ease of traceability. Similarly, our robust product recall system ensures manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, third-party auditors, health officials and other state regulatory bodies, councils, police and consumers are notified of products posing an immediate threat to health and safety, or when food products have defects or a potential health risk.

## Seasonality and climate variations

Outbreaks of foodborne illnesses are more likely in the warmer months when bacteria grow well. The most common bacteria associated with food poisoning is *Salmonella*, and salmonellosis notifications increase in the warmer months. In the summer of 2013, there was an average of 371 salmonellosis notifications in NSW, compared to 186 over the winter months.

Climate variations may result in changes to biodiversity that can threaten the food chain, such as by allowing new pathogens to emerge over time due to adaptation and evolution. It may also enable existing pathogens to thrive and spread under new climatic conditions. For example, warmer sea temperatures may lead to outbreaks of the *Vibrio* species in oysters or cause more frequent algal blooms that impact oyster production during the summer months.

“

There is much scope for the NSW Food Authority to contribute to growth in the food industry, with experience from food incidents in developed and developing countries having demonstrated the role of food quality and safety as a market differentiator.

”



3

OUR GOALS & ACHIEVEMENTS

NSW Food Authority

Scores on Doors  
Hygiene and food safety

Good  
★★★



**OUR GOALS**



# OUR

# VISION

**FOOD SAFETY,  
CONFIDENCE  
AND CERTAINTY  
ACROSS THE  
SUPPLY CHAIN.**

## **OUTCOMES**

**1**

**Safe food production and less foodborne illnesses.**

**2**

**Certainty and confidence for consumers and all food operators.**

**3**

**Innovative and productive food industries.**

**4**

**Globally competitive food businesses.**

# GOALS

# 1

## INCREASE FOOD BUSINESSES' CONTRIBUTIONS TO NSW'S ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

### SUPPORT

Industry access to export markets and reduce non-technical barriers to trade by increasing awareness of the integrated regulatory approach to food safety in NSW among our trading partners.

### ACHIEVE

A premium on international and domestic markets through ensuring products are adequately labelled to confirm food is safe for consumption and reputational value is maintained.

### REDUCE

Businesses' food safety failure rate by working with poor performers through education and training to improve their safe food-handling processes and have them back on track quickly.

### DELIVER

Online licence applications to 15,000 businesses in 2015.

### BUILD

Auditing capacity by partnering with third-parties to conduct audits and inspections in the field.

# GOALS

# 2

## MITIGATE RISKS AND PROTECT THE SAFETY OF NSW CONSUMERS

### REDUCE

#### FOODBORNE ILLNESSES CAUSED BY:

**SALMONELLA**  
(currently around 4,025 cases)

**CAMPYLOBACTER**  
(10,000 cases)

**LISTERIA**  
(30 cases)

**FATAL ANAPHYLAXIS CASES DUE TO ALLERGEN CONTAMINATION**  
(11 cases)

By 30% supported by improved food safety practices, verification programs on farms and at processing facilities, and training across the retail sector.

### COLLABORATE

With universities and research facilities to tackle emerging food safety risks and encourage the uptake of innovations across the supply chain.

### TAILOR

Audit and inspection frequency to the degree of risk presented by particular food types and industries' compliance performance.

### MITIGATE

Environmental impacts on shellfish production through the NSW Food Authority's Harvest and Hold policy, which reduces the time required for producers to meet safety standards in order to return to market after adverse environmental events.

### ENHANCE

Cooperation between the local and state governments, veterinarians, public health officials and industry so the transmission of animal diseases to humans through food is detected early and contained.

### ENSURE

Retail food businesses have FSSs with appropriate nationally recognised food safety training.

### INCREASE

Participation by retail food businesses and councils in the Scores on Doors program to increase businesses' food safety practices and their reputations, and boost consumer confidence in safe food-handling practices.

### RESPOND

Foodborne illness investigations and emergency food incident responses through effective multi agency and response protocols such as early alerts and product recalls to contain risks, minimise reputational damage and enhance consumer and market confidence.



# GOALS

# 3

## IMPROVE THE CLARITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF FOOD INFORMATION PROVIDED TO NSW CONSUMERS AND INDUSTRY

### PROVIDE

Online training and recertification for the NSW Food Authority's 66,000 trained FSSs in the retail service sector.

### CLARIFY

Country of origin labelling for imports and exports to enable consumers to make informed purchases.

### SIMPLIFY

Product labelling by promoting the kilojoule and Health Star Rating systems, which provide easy access to nutritional information.

### DELIVER

Information through the NSW Food Authority website, fact sheets and articles in relevant newspapers in English, Arabic, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Greek, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese to cater for the changing demographics of the Australian market.

### PROVIDE

Expert advice through quarterly online public chat forums with the NSW Food Authority's Chief Scientist.

### TRAIN

Domestic meat and poultry processors in animal welfare, and provide guidelines to ensure animals are treated humanely.

### SERVICE

More than 35,000 helpline enquiries annually.

### TRAIN

Food retailers in the safe handling of raw egg products used in bakery and menu items to minimise outbreaks of salmonellosis.

## ACHIEVE

# 95%



CONSISTENCY IN LOCAL COUNCIL INSPECTIONS OF FOOD RETAIL SERVICES, USING THE FOOD PREMISES AUDIT REPORT

# MEASURES OF SUCCESS

### ACHIEVE

# 30%

INCREASE IN THE VALUE OF NSW'S PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

### ACHIEVE

AN AVERAGE INCREASE IN THE NSW GSP OF

# 1.5%

 PER ANNUM

### INCREASE

NSW'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL PERFORMANCE



### INCREASE

THE RATE OF GROWTH OF NSW'S AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS



### SAVE

# \$4.5M

BY REDUCING RED TAPE FOR NSW BUSINESSES

### INCREASE

NSW BUSINESSES' COMPLIANCE WITH FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS TO

# 95%

### REDUCE

NSW'S OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY RATES BY

# 5%

### INVOLVE

# 75%

 OF NSW RETAIL FOOD SERVICES

IN SCORES ON DOORS

### ENSURE

# 20%

 OF PACKAGED PRODUCTS IN NSW SUPERMARKETS USE THE HEALTH STAR RATING 

## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



### International trading partners recognise our food safety systems

The US Food and Drug Administration reduced the inspection requirements for Australian food products arriving in the US as a result of a review of Australia's food safety regulations facilitated by the NSW Food Authority. This recognition of the effectiveness of our food regulations facilitates international trade and market access. Based on this success, efforts are underway to achieve similar recognition of our food regulation processes by Chinese and EU food authorities.

### \$6 million red-tape reduction makes it easier to do business

The NSW Food Authority has reduced red tape through activities such as establishing a memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture that removes duplication and consolidates audits of NSW businesses currently exporting products so that each business is only audited by one agency. Licence and inspection fees for mobile food vendors operating in multiple council areas have also been reduced.

### Improving customer service to 14,500 Food Authority licensees

The NSW Food Authority performs in excess of 16,000 audits and inspections, assessing businesses for compliance against 78 different licence requirements and responds to more than 2,000 complaints annually. The introduction of a mobile audit system supported by iPad technology has improved the professionalism, information sharing and faster receipt of reports for audits and inspections in real time.

### Nutritional labelling helps consumers make informed food choices

The NSW Food Authority supported the national introduction of the voluntary front-of-pack Health Star Rating system to help consumers make more informed, healthier nutritional choices. NSW was the first state to introduce 8,700-kilojoule product labelling in fast food chains and supermarkets, which enabled consumers to make informed decisions about fast food and ready-to-eat convenience foods.



### Scores on Doors recognises safe food handling and hygiene

In partnership with local councils, the Scores on Doors initiative assesses participating food retail businesses against relevant food safety standards and awards them a rating ranging from five stars for 'excellent' to three stars for 'good'. Displaying these scores on food outlet doors is providing restaurant goers with information about food safety practices.



### Increasing the skills and knowledge of food handlers

The NSW Food Authority food handling and hygiene training programs for food retailers are mitigating the risks of raw egg products causing food poisoning. The NSW Food Authority also supported on-site training at domestic red meat and poultry processing plants to ensure animal welfare, and introduced FSS training to 40,000 retail food service businesses (including restaurants, cafés, takeaway services, and pubs and clubs) to ensure food is handled safely.







4

ADDING VALUE THROUGH THE SUPPLY CHAIN

# ADDING VALUE THROUGH THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Ensuring food safety benefits consumers by reducing the incidence of foodborne illness. It helps to maintain businesses' strong brand reputation, and provides them with domestic and export market opportunities. It also reduces government healthcare costs.

**The NSW Food Authority provides certainty about food safety across the food supply chain and gives consumers confidence by working with industry and the community, from paddock to plate, to facilitate a safe, healthy environment while maintaining economic growth.**

Audits and inspections conducted in partnership with food industry operators and other regulators including our Food Regulation Partnership with local government provide confidence in the NSW Food Authority's regulatory framework and evidence-based scientific research into real and potential food hazards. The Food Authority works to

advance food science to ensure the manufacture, processing and distribution of nutritious and healthy food, as well as inspire innovative production processes. We back up this work by providing education and information to industries and consumers, underpinning and reinforcing consumer confidence in food safety and quality.



NSW FOOD AUTHORITY WORKING ACROSS THE SUPPLY CHAIN TO:

**EDUCATE, REGULATE, COLLABORATE & FACILITATE** FOOD SAFETY IN NSW



**\$12B**

PRIMARY PRODUCTION

**RISKS**

Contamination by disease causing microorganisms like *Salmonella*, *E-coli*, *Listeria*, *Campylobacter*, and viruses.

**ACTIONS**

- Licensing
- Shellfish program
- Food safety schemes in meat, eggs, dairy, plant products & seafood
- On farm management
- Consultation
- Sampling & analysis

**\$25B**

PROCESSING & MANUFACTURE

**RISKS**

Persistence and/or contamination of disease causing microorganisms and viruses due to poor process control, temperature control, hygiene and facility cleaning.

**ACTIONS**

- Food safety schemes
- Licensing, audits & inspections
- Research
- Trade level product recalls
- Animal welfare training in abattoirs
- Consultation
- Sampling & analysis

**\$5B**

STORAGE & DISTRIBUTION

**RISKS**

Poor temperature control, inappropriate storage conditions and packaging, hygiene and cleaning allow hazards to increase.

**ACTIONS**

- Licensing & inspections
- Sampling & analysis
- Monitor food temperatures

**\$45B**

RETAIL

**RISKS**

Poor temperature & pest control, hygiene and cleaning introduce hazards and/or allow them to increase.

**ACTIONS**

- Inspections
- Training & education (FSS)
- Monitor labels
- Consumer product recalls
- Vulnerable persons
- Food Regulation Partnership LGAs
- Consultation

**\$21B\***

CONSUMPTION

**RISKS**

Poor temperature control, cross contamination, understanding of labelling, cleaning and personal hygiene introduce hazards and/or allow them to increase.

**ACTIONS**

- Safe food handling information
- Interpreting labels
- Name & Shame
- Scores on Doors
- Act on complaints
- Sampling & analysis

**\$5.1B†**

IMPORT • EXPORT

**RISKS**

Loss of export markets due to contaminant detection, imported food safety and traceability, and misleading country of origin labelling.

**ACTIONS**

- MOU with Commonwealth Department of Agriculture
- Market access
- Import control
- Standard setting
- Surveillance testing
- Trade partner delegations
- Food safety system recognition



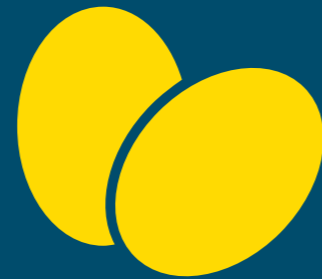
**CONFIDENCE & CERTAINTY**  
ACROSS THE FOOD CHAIN  
**+ HEALTHY**  
PRODUCTIVE CONSUMERS & COMMUNITIES

\* 7.4 million residents; 28 million tourists. † Exports.

# INDUSTRY



DAIRY



EGGS



SEAFOOD



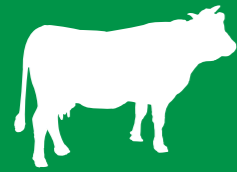
RED MEAT  
& POULTRY

# SNAPSHOT

BUSINESSES & CONSUMERS PAY A VERY LOW COST FOR FOOD REGULATION THAT GIVES A HIGH LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN THE SAFETY OF NSW FOOD.

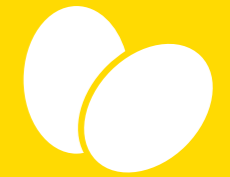


# DAIRY



## FOOD REGULATORY COST BORNE BY THE CONSUMER

# EGGS



PER



PER



THAT IS JUST

**0.65%**

OF THE COST TO THE CONSUMER BUYING

**DAIRY PRODUCTS**

THE FOOD REGULATORY COST TO

**DAIRY BUSINESSES**

IS

**18%**

OF THEIR OVERALL REGULATORY COSTS

THAT IS JUST

**0.11%**

OF THE COST TO THE CONSUMER BUYING

**EGG PRODUCTS**

THE FOOD REGULATORY COST TO

**EGG BUSINESSES**

IS

**6%**

OF THEIR OVERALL REGULATORY COSTS

SEAFOOD



FOOD REGULATORY COST BORNE BY THE CONSUMER

RED MEAT & POULTRY



18 CENTS

PER

KILO OF SEAFOOD (INCLUDING SHELLFISH)

4 CENTS

PER KILO OF CHICKEN

11 CENTS

PER KILO OF RED MEAT

THAT IS JUST

1.05%

OF THE COST TO THE CONSUMER BUYING

SEAFOOD PRODUCTS

THE FOOD REGULATORY COST TO

SEAFOOD BUSINESSES

IS

12%

OF THEIR OVERALL REGULATORY COSTS

THAT IS JUST

0.66%

OF THE COST TO THE CONSUMER BUYING

CHICKEN PRODUCTS

THAT IS JUST

0.72%

OF THE COST TO THE CONSUMER BUYING

RED MEAT PRODUCTS

THE FOOD REGULATORY COST TO RED MEAT & POULTRY BUSINESSES

IS 33% OF THEIR OVERALL REGULATORY COSTS



## LOW-COST COMPLIANCE

The safety and quality of food in NSW relies on contributions from, and interactions between, regulation, regulators and business. These contributions and interactions include minimum food safety standards and regulations enforced by the NSW Food Authority, as well as quality assurance audits and inspections undertaken by major food retail companies and food service businesses.

The average rate of compliance across all industry sectors in NSW is 94 per cent.

The NSW Food Authority has a central role in mitigating food safety risks across the supply chain by dealing directly with relevant businesses and stakeholders. By working with our 55,000 licensed businesses, we ensure food safety programs are implemented consistently, and over the past six years, we have reached an average of 94 per cent compliance.

This compliance rate is underpinned by an industry monitoring system, which includes regular audits and inspections conducted by the NSW Food Authority and local government on both licensed businesses and non-licensed businesses (food manufacturers and wholesalers).

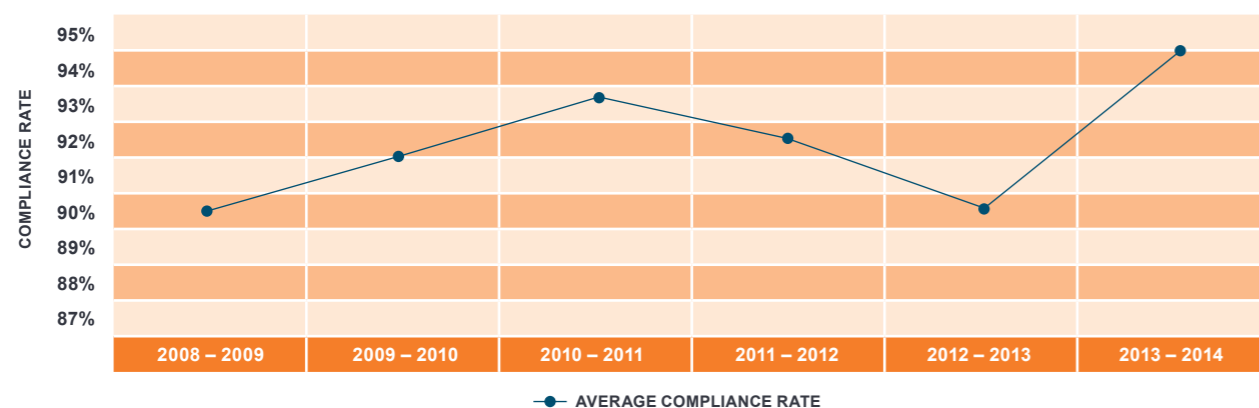
The compliance rate of non-licensed businesses is lower. However, we have seen a drop in the rate of foodborne illnesses, and we will continue to increase compliance in non-licensed businesses over the next two years through education in safe food handling and manufacturing.

It is important to note that the consistently high rate of compliance with food safety regulations in NSW accounts for a minor proportion of the cost of doing business. The NSW Food Authority audit schemes provide industry with assurance that the reputations of the industry and of the state will be protected from rogue operators. They also give consumers confidence that food products are safe.

Businesses incur relatively small costs as a result of food regulation and, similarly, consumers pay very small amounts within the cost of goods as a result of regulatory costs on business.

The regulatory cost of food safety amounts to around 1 per cent of the retail price.

## COMPLIANCE RATES – NSW FOOD BUSINESSES



## COST OF FOOD REGULATION AS A COMPONENT OF RETAIL PRICES

FOOD TYPE	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE (EST.)	COST OF FOOD REGULATION AS A COMPONENT OF RETAIL PRICES	
Chicken	\$5.51 / kg	3.6 c / kg	0.66%
Red Meat	\$14.92 / kg	10.8 c / kg	0.72%
Milk	\$1.56 / L	1.0 c / L	0.65%
Eggs	\$4.11 / dozen	0.4 c / dozen	0.11%
Seafood	\$17.20 / kg	18.1 c / kg	1.05%

Source: KPMG, Estimating the impacts of food regulation in NSW, December 2014

### Driving growth and innovation in food industries

The state's economic development framework is the government's road map for driving growth in priority NSW industries and in the NSW economy to 2021.

To support this framework, the NSW Food Authority:

- **Leads the food safety response** and advocates for NSW food industries through its industry consultative committees, which bring expertise, new ideas and strategic focus across the food supply sectors to drive economic growth and produce safe food. We support this by facilitating market accreditation to enhance businesses' reputations, and through recall and incident management, which minimises the number of people falling ill during outbreaks.
- **Makes it easy to do business** by streamlining duplicate processes through removing Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) notification requirements. Retail food service businesses are currently required to appoint and train an FSS. As of January 2014, 40,000 food service businesses were no longer required

to notify the NSW Food Authority or their local council of their FSS appointment. In 2015 we will be removing further duplication for the restaurants and cafes across the State when we no longer require them to notify their business details to the NSW Food Authority, instead they will simply continue to notify their local councils to comply with the law. Online applications for licensees will be available as of 2015, saving time on basic administration. Collectively delivering an estimated \$1.5 million in red tape savings.

- **Collaborates to drive innovation and competition through sophisticated technology-driven business practices**, investing \$18 million over six years in R&D in eggs, meat, dairy, seafood and plant products and food services in vulnerable populations (including the elderly, children and pregnant women). Our work with industry consultative committees harnesses ideas from industry and small businesses that support technology-driven business practices, such as using barcodes to trace products during food recalls and emergency outbreaks.

## Healthier choices through nutritional labelling

The Food Authority works closely with NSW Health to deliver the Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2013–2018 by supporting healthier consumer choices through improved nutritional information.

NSW was the first state to introduce the kilojoule product labelling in fast food chains and supermarkets, which enabled consumers to make informed decisions about fast food and ready-to-eat convenience foods.

Commencing in 2012, the kilojoule labelling initiative required large fast food and snack retail food outlets to display nutritional information (energy, expressed as kilojoules) on menus at the point of sale. This initiative remains part of the NSW Government's broad set of responses to help reduce high rates of overweight and obesity in the community. The NSW Food Authority's 2013 evaluation of the program revealed that 90 per cent of fast food chains had implemented the new requirements. The NSW Government provided \$1.18 million to a consumer education campaign, and these combined efforts of industry and government saw consumers gain a better understanding of the optimum average daily energy intake, and a 15 per cent reduction in kilojoules purchased.

We also collaborate with industry to help consumers make healthier food choices through the national Health Star Rating front-of-pack labelling on packaged foods, which indicates which foods have higher nutritional value. The Health Star Rating system forms part of the NSW Government's wider contribution to alleviating the burden of overweight and obesity issues.

## Reducing foodborne illnesses

Food safety is fundamental for healthy communities and a competitive economy. From 2000 to 2010, NSW experienced a 28 per cent increase in foodborne salmonellosis, mainly due to the inappropriate handling of raw eggs, and a 13 per cent increase in foodborne illnesses caused by the *Campylobacter* bacteria, commonly due to consuming undercooked poultry.

Foodborne illnesses in NSW cost the community \$375 million in medical expenses and lost productivity annually. However, the majority of incidences are preventable through education and training in safe food-handling processes.

Reducing the impact of foodborne illnesses and ensuring they are effectively managed is integral to the NSW Food Authority. We will work with medium- to high-risk industries to maintain safe handling processes in retail food service businesses and reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses due to *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Listeria* bacteria – as well as fatal anaphylaxis cases caused by allergen contamination – by 30 per cent over the next five years.

## Secure and sustainable supply

Food systems encompass food production, processing, packaging, distribution, sale and consumption. Operating safe food systems require knowledge of how to safely handle, prepare, transport and store food.

Transitional economies such as China and India are shifting the consumer focus from food security to food safety and quality. This reflects the rising purchasing power of these countries, as well as their experience with food outbreaks domestically. As a result, there has been a shift in consumer spending towards imported foods with a stronger global reputation for safety and quality, such as those produced in NSW.

### SALMONELLA BACTERIA CAUSES GASTROENTERITIS

Outbreaks are often linked to consumption and cross contamination involving raw or undercooked poultry, eggs or meat.

### CAMPYLOBACTER BACTERIA CAUSES GASTROENTERITIS

People become exposed by handling raw poultry, eating undercooked poultry, or drinking contaminated, non-chlorinated water or unpasteurised milk.

### LISTERIOSIS IS CAUSED BY THE LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES BACTERIA

It's rare but serious for people with poor immune systems and the elderly, and can cause pregnant women to miscarry. High-risk foods include raw and prepared seafood, pre-mixed raw vegetables, pre-cooked meats, unpasteurised milk, soft-serve ice creams and soft cheeses.



## Developing sustainable agriculture

Incidents that threaten the reputation of the industry can have long term impacts on demand and growth in countries or regions where regulatory frameworks are lacking or poorly enforced.

Achieving food safety involves more than just growing food. A critical challenge is to produce food in a consistent, secure and sustainable manner that meets consumer preferences, uses the least resources and creates the smallest environmental footprint. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) works with NSW commercial fisheries and agricultural producers (including those involved in aquaculture) to maintain market access and demand. This involves developing profitable and sustainable agriculture and fisheries production techniques that are biologically secure, and ensuring the best management of catchments, natural resources and water. The NSW Food Authority, as part of the DPI, supports this through regulating food industries to ensure food is safe and correctly labelled.

## Managing emergency outbreaks and food incidents

Timely investigation of food emergencies and incidents through science-led assessment,

Australia has a single, scalable food incident response protocol that is regularly reviewed by the government.

as well as early food recalls, involves working with industry and consumers.

When communities are affected by a foodborne illness outbreak, the NSW Food Authority works to ensure everyone is notified of products posing an immediate threat to health and safety. We work with NSW Health, police and emergency services, manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, third-party auditors, health officials and other state regulatory bodies, councils and consumers, to notify everyone of a potential health risk or food products with defects.

The NSW Food Authority undertakes simulations of food incidents to test its preparedness and ensure staff members are fully trained to respond. In 2014, together with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), the NSW Food Authority met with all jurisdictions and peak industry groups to align government and industry response protocols. A key

outcome was a commitment to share information to collectively improve the state's approach to incident management.

Supporting the protocol is a well-established system for recalling food that represents a risk to public health. The NSW Food Authority works with industry, FSANZ and state food safety agencies to ensure recalled foods are swiftly removed from the market. Supported by early alerts on product recalls, the NSW Food Authority ensures industry participants are aware of their obligations, have plans in place to identify and promptly remove at-risk food, and maintain product records that enable stock to be traced easily in the market.

The NSW Food Authority ensures a reliable process in terms of product traceability. In an effort to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses associated with eggs, those sold in NSW are required to be stamped for ease of traceability. Additionally, in an effort to improve safety in the shellfish sector, the NSW Food Authority undertook a snapshot compliance survey of the supply chain, from harvester to retailer in 2014. Businesses were asked to provide traceback evidence for their produce using information from the label, which showed a high level of compliance.

# WORKING WITH SMALL BUSINESS

IN NSW THERE ARE

683,000



SMALL BUSINESSES

COMPRISING

96%

OF ALL NSW BUSINESS

EMPLOYING



OF THE STATE'S WORKFORCE

OF THESE

12,700\*

ARE IN THE



DAIRY



EGG



SEAFOOD



MEAT

SECTOR

EMPLOYING

69,000 PEOPLE

As the majority of food-related businesses are small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the NSW Government collaborates with the NSW Small Business Commissioner to enable these businesses to thrive, supporting them to develop a broader range of premium, niche products by driving innovation and competition.

Through the Food Regulation Partnership (FRP), the Food Authority partners with 152 local councils to increase engagement with business communities and ensure that retail food service businesses are inspected against standard food-handling and hygiene criteria, and that they comply with food safety regulations.

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's Local government compliance and enforcement: Regulation Review – Draft Report October 2013 highlights the FRP as a leading engagement model between states and local governments.

To highlight those businesses that have breached NSW food safety laws, the Food Authority publishes a 'name and shame' list, which gives consumers information to help them decide where to eat or buy food. In 2014, less than 2 per cent of NSW businesses breached regulations (1,587 penalties), which highlights the state's overall strong track record.

\*12,700 NSW Food Authority licensees.



5

SAFER FOOD, CLEARER CHOICES



The NSW Government is committed to delivering safe food. The NSW Food Authority, along with DPI, NSW Health and local government, will consistently provide clear and accessible information to everyone across the food supply chain to deliver excellent service to industry and consumers.

Our goal is to ensure that food-safe businesses contribute to NSW's economic growth and prosperity by reducing the incidence of foodborne illnesses and delivering premium-quality food for NSW, consumers across Australia and international markets.

With a strong track record of 94 per cent compliance in our food-producing industries (which we aim to increase to 95 per cent over the next six years), we will continue to mitigate risk across the supply chain to deliver premium-quality food and growth in export markets.

### WE WILL DO THIS THROUGH:

Implementing quality assurance in food-handling and food production processes to reduce foodborne illnesses

Educating consumers through nutritional and allergen information to ensure they can make informed choices

Decreasing food safety failure rate by working with poor performers

Collaborating with industry on R&D to deliver innovation in food technology processes

Working with industries, all levels of government and other jurisdictions to streamline regulation and compliance requirements for businesses

Ensuring emergency management is responsive and provides timely recovery from foodborne illness outbreaks and biosecurity threats

Implementing food safety regulation that ensures the safe supply of food to domestic and export markets

Increasing food businesses' contributions to NSW's economic growth and prosperity.

The NSW Food Authority's objective of safer food, clearer choices drives our work and our food regulation system. We work with the federal government and local governments throughout NSW to enforce the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, the Food Act 2003 (NSW), the Food Regulation 2010 (NSW) and a range of food safety programs.

In partnership with the food industry and the community, we work to inform, develop and administer policy and legislation appropriately so that food in NSW is safe.



# NSW FOOD INDUSTRY REGULATION FRAMEWORK



“ Effective food safety and quality management underpins confidence in Australia’s food industry and the NSW Food Authority makes an important contribution to this system in NSW. ”





**Food  
Authority**

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FI223/1503  
Food Safety Strategy | March 2015